No 633 October 28, 2001

THE FUNDAY TIMES

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Discover what Chuckie and the Rugrats look like out of their nappies
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Adults beware!
We have a secret chat with the young stars of the hit movie, Spy Kids
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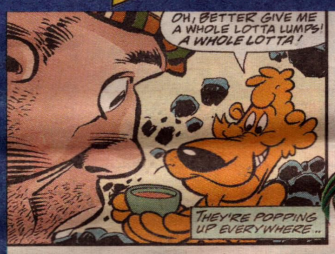
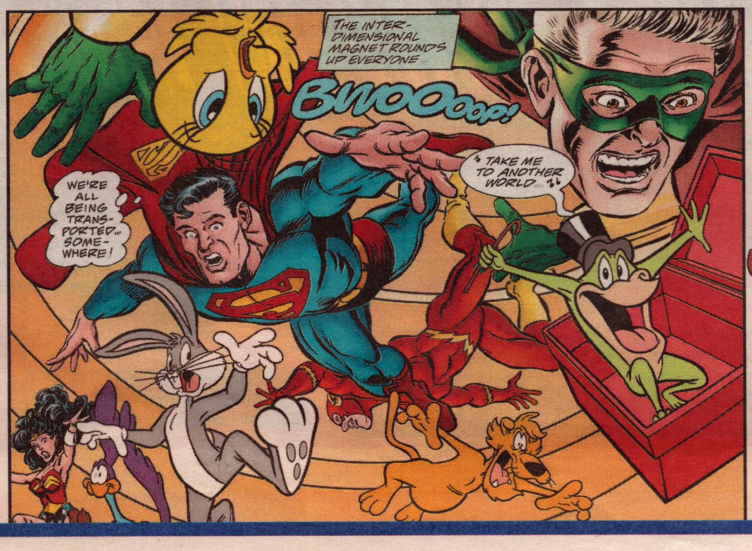
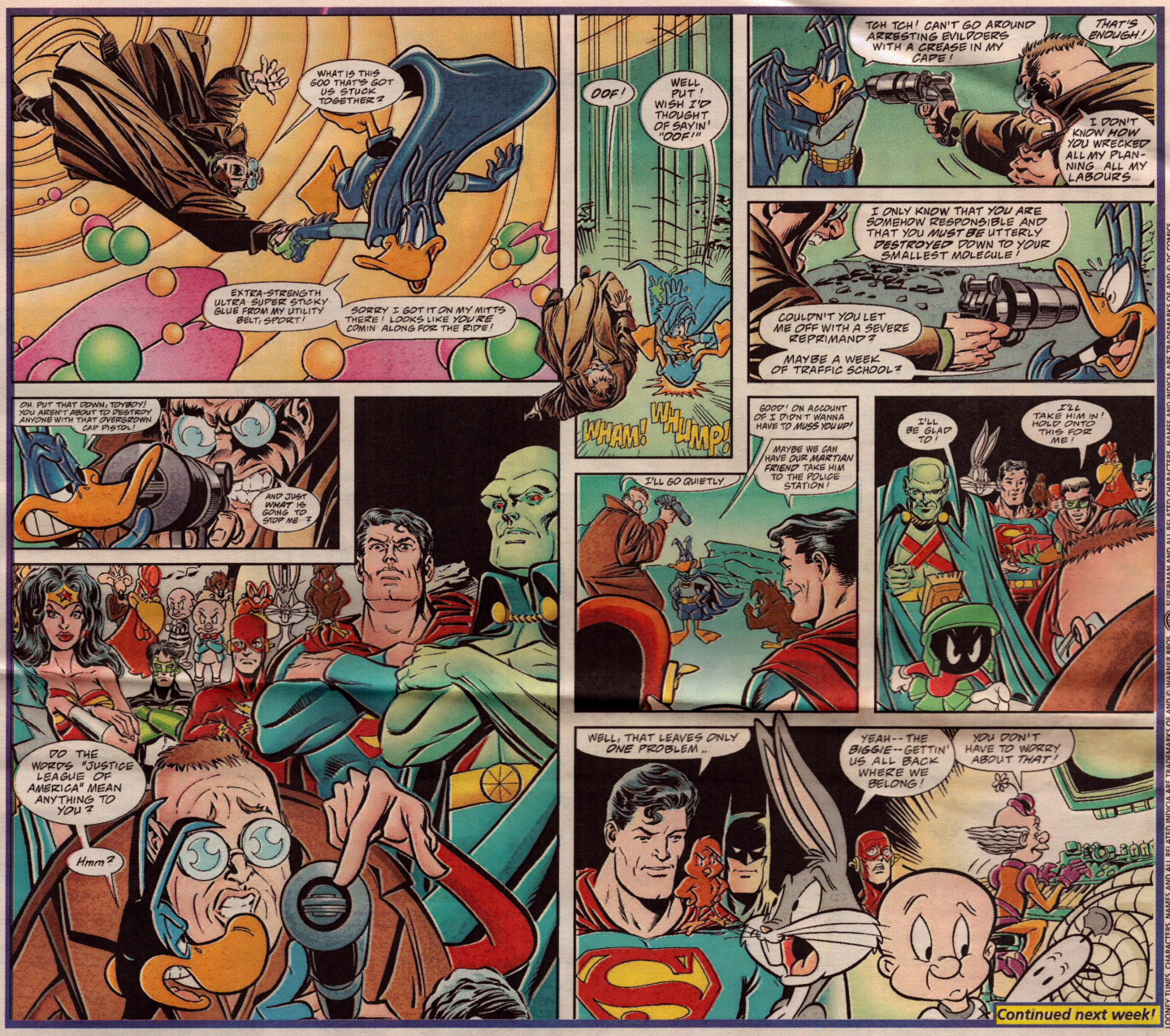
SUPERMAN in & BUGS BUNNY CWISIS ON INFINITE EARTHS!

The story so far – Mr Mxyzptlk is all set to finally merge the Looney Tunes and DC Super Heroes' dimensions for ever!





More inside



LOONEY TUNES CHARACTERS NAMES AND ALL RELATED INDICIA ARE TRADEMARKS OF AND © WARNER BROS SUPERMAN AND ALL RELATED CHARACTERS NAMES AND INDICIA ARE TRADEMARKS OF AND © DC COMICS [301]

THERE'S A CHILL IN THE AIR

If you get spooked out at Hallowe'en – imagine what it was like 2,000 years ago.

Hallowe'en is thought to date back to the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain. The Celts, who lived in what is now Ireland, the UK and northern France, celebrated their new year on November 1 – a day marking the end of the summer harvest and a time associated with death. They celebrated on the night of October 31, when they believed ghosts of the dead returned to haunt them.

Celtic druids built massive sacred bonfires on which people made human and animal sacrifices and everybody dressed up in animal heads and skins.

Later on, the Romans combined two of their festivals with Samhain; Feralia, a day to commemorate the passing of the dead and the day to honour Pomona – the Roman goddess of fruit and trees. The symbol of Pomona is the apple, which is probably where apple bobbing came from.

Irish immigrants fleeing their country's potato famine took Hallowe'en to America in the 1840s.

The American tradition of trick or treat probably dates back to All Souls' Day parades in England, when poor people would beg for food and families would give them soul-cakes. In return they would pray for the families' dead.

Spooked out yet? If so, cheer up because we've got 100 funky pumpkin Post-it Notes to give away!

To enter, tell us the name of the TV witch played by Melissa Joan Hart.

Mark your entry PUMPKIN and send it with your name, age and address, to the competition address on page 11.

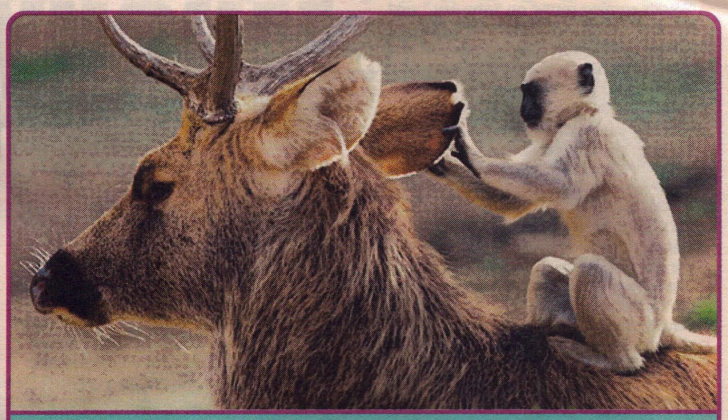
Read the final Cwisis On Infinite Earths! episode next week

FUNDAY

NEWS

Mall rats

Chuckie, Angelica and the rest of the Rugrats gang are about to act all grown up! But fear not, fans of the baby-based Nickelodeon show, it's only for a one-off episode to celebrate the hit toon's 10th anniversary. Rugrats: All Growed Up takes a look into the "foocher", after the babies wonder whether Angelica gets any nicer as she grows up. And as you can see Tommy, Phil and Lil have hair, Chuckie has braces and Angelica is a 13-year-old mall rat! "We get letters from kids all the time wondering what the Rugrats would look like when they grow up," explains executive producer Eryk Casemiro. "We've always been a little uncomfortable about doing that, but I guess a fantasy piece like this makes it okay." Watch the one-hour special, Rugrats: All Growed Up, on Nickelodeon this Friday from 5pm.

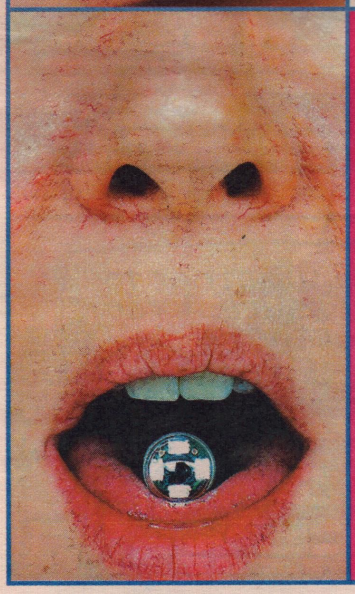


Deer trip

This cheeky Hanuman langur monkey was caught checking this Barasingha deer's ears at the zoo in Hanover, northern Germany, earlier this month. The Hanuman langur are known as little gods in India and hoards of them live in the country's many temples. The "holy" monkeys can jump more than 10m, but it's obviously easier to hitch a ride on the nearest deer!

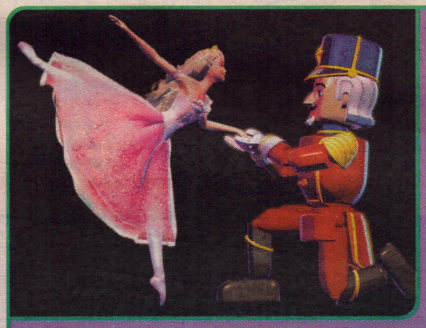
Becks squashed!

Manchester United ace and England skipper, David Beckham, had to use a body-double to shoot the latest Pepsi TV ad, to ensure that he wasn't flattened by a 177kg sumo wrestler! Becks appears alongside top world stars Zinedine Zidane and Raul in the new ad, which will hit the screens during next year's World Cup in Japan and South Korea. The soccer stars play a game of footy against a team of giant sumo wrestlers. Insurance firms decided that it was unwise for the players to be tackled by the wrestlers because between them, Beckham, Zidane and Raul are worth a mindblowing £135m! The look-alikes acted in the physical scenes and computer wizards put the players' faces on them afterwards.



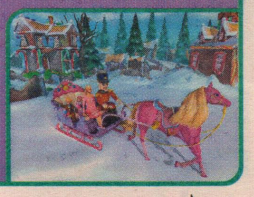
Pioneer pill

A small pill fitted with a video camera that can transmit images from inside the stomach, to help detect illness, has been successfully tested on a patient in Australia. The thumbnail-sized pill, which contains a light, a camera, a transmitter, an antenna and a battery, can be used to see whether a patient is suffering from internal bleeding. The groundbreaking tablet was developed by the US space agency Nasa ... and can certainly go where no medical equipment has gone before! A hi-tech belt is put around the patient's stomach before they swallow the pill. The belt can then record what's going on inside the gut for up to seven hours.



Ballet Barbie

Barbie is set to make her movie debut in the computer-animated video, Barbie In The Nutcracker. The dancing in the flick was "motion captured" using real dancers from the New York Ballet. Principal dancer, Maria Kowroski, was chosen to play the famous figure. "I feel honoured to be playing the woman who dances life into Barbie," she says. Maria was made to wear a suit with 25 optical sensors on it. To breathe life into Barbie, Mariah's movements were tracked by 13 infra-red cameras that circled her while she danced the role, and a computer record of her body's motion was made. "I looked ridiculous but it was fun," Maria laughs. "And I hope that it brings a new generation of young girls to ballet."



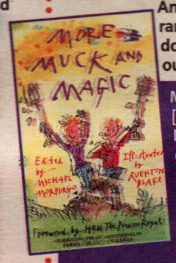
PICTURES: REUTERS, AP/FABIAN BIMMER

MUCKY MAGIC

Read our exclusive Jacqueline Wilson story, What's The Country?, from the new More Muck And Magic book collection, edited by Michael Morpurgo

"Mick's coming round on Saturday," said Mum.
Skippy smiled. She always smiles. If you told her the Bogeyman was coming to take her out she'd clap her hands and smile.
I didn't smile. I can't stick Mick. I don't see why Mum has to have a stupid boyfriend at her age. She says he makes her happy.
I can't see why she can't just be happy with Skippy and me.
"Mick's going to take us on a special day out!" Mum announced.
Skippy smiled. I nearly smiled too.
We didn't often get special days out.
I wondered where we might be going? A day trip to Disneyland? No, maybe not. But maybe Mick would take us to the Red River Theme Park and we could go on all the really brilliant rides where you swoop up and down and it's like you're flying right up in the sky.
"Will he take us to the Red River Theme Park, Mum?"
"Don't be daft, Hayley," said Mum. "It costs a fortune. Mick's not made of money. No, we're going to have a lovely day out in the country."
"The country?" I said.
"What's the country?" Skippy asked.
"It's boring," I said.
I hadn't actually been to the country much but of course I knew all about it. We've got this old video about kids living on a farm in the country. The main girl in it is called Hayley like me. It's a good film but the country looks awful. Cold and empty and muddy, with cows that chase you.
I moaned and Mum said I was a spoilt little whatsit and I went in our bedroom and sulked. Skippy came and cuddled up beside me.
"We don't like the country," she said, to show me she was on my side – though Skippy is always on everyone's side. "That's right, Skip. We don't like the country. And we don't like Mick."
"We don't like Mick," Skippy echoed obediently, but she didn't sound so sure.
When Mick knocked at our door at nine o'clock on Saturday morning Skippy went rushing up to him going "Mick, Mick, Mick!" Skippy is useless at not liking people.
I am brilliant at it. And Mick was making it easy-peasy. He looked ridiculous. He always looks a bit wet and weedy but today he was wearing a big woolly jumper right up to his chin and awful baggy cord trousers and boots. Honestly. I knew Mum could act a bit loopy at times but she had to be barking mad to go round with Mick.
"Ready, girls?" he said, swinging Skippy round and round while she squealed and kicked her legs, her shoes falling off. "Have you got any welly boots, Skip? I think you'll need them." He put on a silly voice [well, his own voice is silly, but this was sillier]. "It gets right mucky in the country, lass."
Skippy put on my old Kermit wellies and her Minnie Mouse mac.
"It's a mouse-frog!" said Mick, and Skippy fell about laughing.

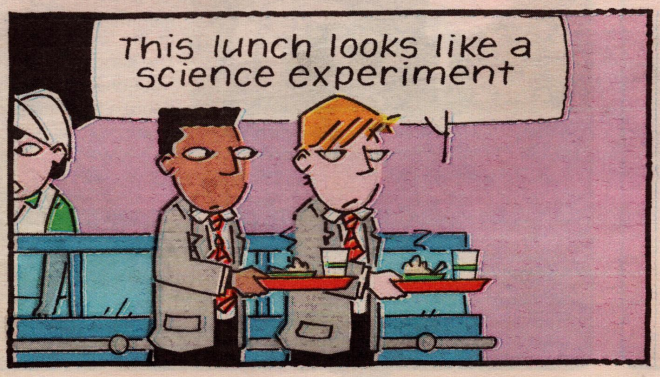
I sighed heavily.
"What about your wellies, Hayley?" said Mick. "And I should put a jumper on too."
I took no notice. As if I'd be seen dead in wellies! And I was wearing the simply incredible designer T-shirt Mum found for 20p down at the school jumble. I wasn't going to cover it up with an old sweater even if it snowed.
Mum looked like she wanted to give me a shake, but she got distracted looking for our old Thermos flask. We were having a picnic. I'd helped cut the sandwiches. [Skippy sucked the cut-off crusts until they went all slimy like ice-lollies.] The sandwiches were egg and banana and ham [not all together though maybe it would taste good?] and there were apples and crisps and a giant bar of chocolate and orange juice for Skip and me and tea for Mum and Mick.
It seemed a seriously yummy picnic. It looked like I might be going to enjoy this day out in spite of myself.
Skippy and I nagged to nibble the chocolate in the car on the way to the country. Mum said we had to wait till picnic time. Hours and hours and hours! Mick said "Oh, let the girls have a piece now if they're really hungry."
He rooted in the picnic bag and handed the whole bar over. This was a serious mistake. Skippy and I tucked in determinedly. By the time Mum peered round at us we'd eaten nearly three-quarters.
Mum was very cross.
"How could you be so greedy? Hayley, you should have stopped Skippy. You know she gets car sick."
"She's fine, Mum. Stop fussing. You're OK, aren't you, Skip? You don't feel sick, do you?"
Skippy said she didn't feel sick at all. She tried to smile. She was very pale, though her lips were dark brown with chocolate.
"Oh dear," said Mum. "Have you got a spare plastic bag, Mick? We need it kind of urgently."
She was just in time. Skippy was very, very sick. It was so revolting that it made me feel a little bit sick too. We drove slowly with the window wide open. I shut my eyes and wondered when we were ever going to get to this boring old countryside. I'd lost interest in the picnic. I just wanted it to be time to go home.
"Here we are!" Mick said cheerily at long, long, long last.
I opened my eyes and looked around. I hadn't realised the country was going to be so green. That old film with the other Hayley was in black and white.
"We used to come here on days out when I was a boy," Mick said excitedly. "Isn't it lovely?"
There was nothing much there. No shops. No cafes. Not even an ice-cream van. Just lots and lots of trees. And fields. And a big big hill in the distance, so tall there were grey clouds all round the top like fuzzy hair.
"That's like Lookout Hill," said Mick. "Right, girls! Let's climb it!"
I stared at him as if he was mad. Even Mum looked taken aback. He said it as if climbing miles up into the clouds was a big treat! We don't reckon it so great climbing three flights of stairs up to our flat when the lift breaks down.
"Isn't it a bit too far?" said Mum.
"No, no. We'll be up it in a matter of minutes, you'll see," said Mick.
Mick is a liar. Those few minutes went on for hours. First we trudged through the woods. It was freezing cold and dark and miserable and I hated it. Mick saw me shivering and offered me his big woolly but I wouldn't wear it. He put it on Skip instead, right over her mac. She staggered along looking loopy, the hem right down round her ankles. Mum said she looked like a little sheep so Skip went baa baa baa.
"Then we were out of the wood and walking across a field. Skip went skipping about until she stepped in something disgusting. I laughed at her. Then I stepped in something too.
I squealed and moaned and wiped my shoes five hundred times in the grass. We seemed to be wading through a vast animal toilet.
"Stop making such a fuss, Hayley. We'll clean your shoes properly when we get home," said Mum.
She didn't look as if she was enjoying the country that much either. Her hair was blowing all over the place and her eye make-up was running.
"Now for the final stretch," said Mick, taking Mum's hand. She held on to Skippy with the other.
I hung back. I climbed up after them. Up and up and up and up. And up and up and up. And up some more.
My head hurt and my chest was tight and a stitch stabbed my side and my legs ached so much I couldn't keep up.
"This sucks," I gasped, and I sat down hard on the damp mucky grass.
"Come on, Hayley!" Mick called, holding out his other hand.
"No thanks. I'll wait here. I don't want to go up the stupid hill," I said.
"You've got to come too, Hayley," said Mum. "We can't leave you here all by yourself."
So they forced me up and I had to stagger onwards. Up and up and up and up.
I wasn't cold any more. I was boiling hot. My designer T-shirt was sticking to me. My shoes were not only mucky and spoilt, but they were giving me blisters. If I was as little as Skippy I might have started crying.
"It'll be worth it when we get right to the top and you see the view," said Mick.
What view? He was crazy. We were right up in the clouds and it was grey and gloomy and drizzling.
"Nearly there!" Mad Mick yelled above me. "See!"
Then Mum gasped. Skippy squeaked. And I staggered up after them out of the clouds – and there I was on the top of the hill and the sun was suddenly out, shining just for us right above the clouds in this private secret world in the air. There were real sheep munching grass and a Skippy-sheep capering around like crazy. I stood still, my heart thumping, the breeze cool on my hot cheeks, looking up at the vast sky. I saw a bird flying way up even higher. I felt as if I could fly too. Just one more step and I'd be soaring.
The clouds below were drifting and parting and suddenly I could see the view. I could see for miles and miles and miles – the green slopes and the dark woods and the silver river glittering in the sunlight. I was on top of the whole world!
"Wow!" I said.
Skippy smiled. Mum smiled. Mick smiled. And I smiled too. Then we all ran hand in hand down down down the hill, ready for our picnic.



More Muck and Magic [Egmont, £4.99] is edited by Michael Morpurgo and celebrates the 25th anniversary of the charity Farms For City Children. Founded by Michael and Clare Morpurgo, Farms For City Children [www.farmsforcitychildren.co.uk] provides schoolchildren with a chance to spend a week on a working farm.

ILLUSTRATION BY QUENTIN BLAKE

Jarvis



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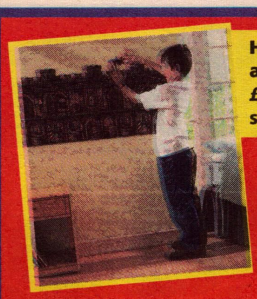
More cool fiction coming soon in Funday!

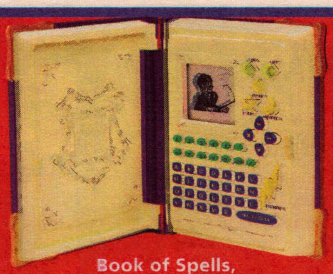
HARRY'S HOARD

With the film just days away, Harry Potter mania has gripped the high street. Funday gives you a round-up of the best Potter products around



Harry Potter 5m-long frieze and peelable stickers, £24.99. Available at DIY superstores and shops

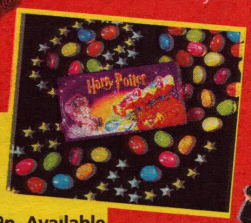
Girl's Harry Potter pyjamas, £17-£21. Available at Marks and Spencer and www.marksandspencer.com



Book of Spells, £24.99. Available at Woolworths, Argos, Index, Toys R Us

Magic Spell Challenge, £19.99 Available at Woolworths, Argos, Index, Toys R Us

Harry and the Devil's Snare mini action game, £9.99. Available at Woolworths, Argos, Index, Toys R Us



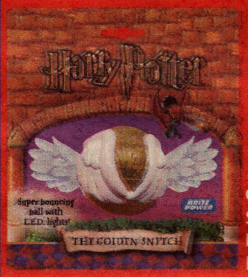
Bertie Botts Every Flavour Beans, 39p. Available at supermarkets and newsagents

Chocolate Frogs with collectable cards, 79p. Available at supermarkets and newsagents

E-Labyrinth game, £19.99. Available at Woolworths, Argos, Index, Toys R Us

Golden Snitch book light, £5.99. Available at Argos, Littlewoods, Ottakar's, John Lewis, Borders, Toymaster

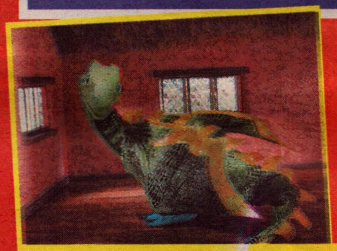
Quidditch Broom interactive game, £34.99. Available at Woolworths, Argos, Index, Toys R Us



Golden Snitch bouncing ball, £4.99. Available at Littlewoods, John Lewis, Martins, Toymaster

Lego Hogwarts Castle, £79.99. Available at Argos, Toys R Us, WHSmith and www.LEGO.com

Harry's Levitating Challenge, £39.99. Available at Woolworths, Argos, WHSmith and Toys R Us



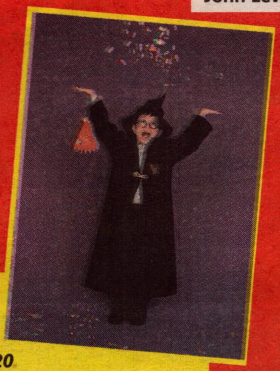
Roarin' Snorin' Norbert interactive dragon, £39.99. Available at Woolworths, Argos, WHSmith and Toys R Us

Harry Potter Ready Bed, £29.99. From Worlds Apart, call 0800 389 8591 or www.worldsapart.com

Hedwig pen light, £3.99. Available at Argos, Littlewoods, Ottakar's, John Lewis, Toymaster

3-D Harry Potter bubblebath, £4.99. Available at Boots, Woolworths and Toys R Us

Lego Snape's Class, £16.99. Available at Argos, Toys R Us, WHSmith and www.LEGO.com



Harry Potter dress-up outfit, £20. Available at Marks and Spencer and www.marksandspencer.com

Hogwarts Heroes fashion dolls – featuring Hermione, Harry and Ron, £12.99 each. Available at Woolworths, Argos, WHSmith and Toys R Us

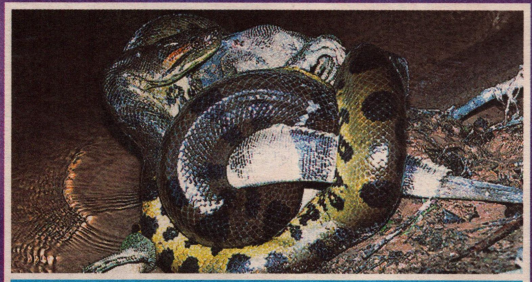
Got a favourite Harry Potter product – or one that's let you down? Write to f-mail and let us know

FANG-TASTIC

There are more than 3,000 species of snake slithering around the world. The legless reptiles are great survivors and have been around for millions of years. They come in a huge array of colours, live in every kind of habitat, and have different, yet always effective, killing techniques. Read on to find out more ... if you dare!

PYTH-ON AND ON

The reticulated python is the longest snake in the world and can grow up to 10m. Found in Southeast Asia, it likes to feed on mammals, birds, and large lizards. The python, like the anaconda, is a constrictor and kills by suffocation. The only longer recorded snake is the prehistoric Gigantophis garstini, which lived in Egypt about 38 million years ago, and measured up to 11m long.

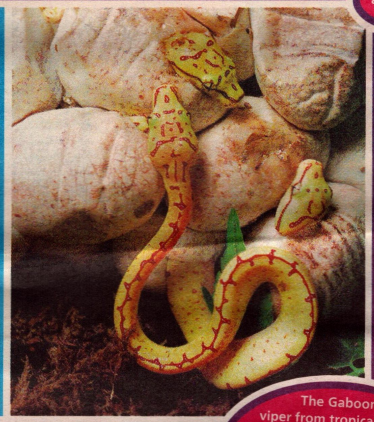


TIGHT SQUEEZE

The reticulated python may be the longest snake, but the anaconda is the biggest in terms of body mass – it can weigh more than 227kg. As a member of the boa constrictor family, the anaconda kills by coiling its large, powerful body around its victim [like this unlucky iguana!] and gradually squeezes until it suffocates. Then, it unhinges its jaw and swallows the victim whole. It can even swallow a grown man.

BIRTH DAY

Boa constrictors, water snakes and garter snakes give birth to live young. Other snakes, such as the green tree python [right], lay eggs. The eggs incubate for 39 to 65 days and the hatchlings vary in colour from brick red to yellow and brown, but as they mature they turn green. The baby snakes are approximately 30.5cm long but grow to about 1.8m.



Snakes are completely deaf

SKIN DEEP

The Montpellier is a venomous snake found in southern Europe, but it's not generally dangerous to humans. This snake can grow up to 2m long and, like all snakes, it sheds [or sloughs] its skin in one piece. This allows the snake to grow because snakeskin, which is made up of scales, does not have the elasticity of human skin. Once the snake grows too big for its skin it has to shed it.

Ireland, Iceland, Hawaii and New Zealand are the only countries with no snakes

HIDE AND SEEK

Also known as a sidewinder, the Peringuey's adder uses awesome camouflage to ambush its prey. The adder lives in deserts and moves along the hot sand in a sideways motion, so that only a small piece of its body touches the ground at any one time. The snake catches its unsuspecting prey by concealing itself in the sand, with only its eyes showing, before launching a deadly attack!

Mad American Gordon Cates kissed 11 cobras consecutively on September 25, 1999

FULL OF VENOM

Although snakes prefer not to bite humans, 50,000 to 100,00 people die every year from snake bites. Anti-venoms are developed to treat victims. Venom is extracted from snakes [see picture] by "milking" them. Then, a small amount of venom is injected in to a large mammal before the quantity is steadily increased so the animal can develop antibodies to the venom. Its blood is extracted and the antibodies are concentrated and stored.

HOME GROWN

The grass snake is one of the most common and widespread snakes in Europe. It is Britain's largest reptile and can grow up to a metre in length – but you're safe because it's harmless to humans! It is found in England and Wales and lives in damp areas, including riverbanks and ditches. The grass snake is also a good swimmer and feeds on frogs, toads, fish and newts.

The Gaboon viper from tropical Africa produces more venom than any other snake. A single adult male is thought to have enough venom to inject lethal doses into 30 people

SNAKE, RATTLE 'N' ROLL

The western diamond-back rattlesnake is found throughout southwestern America and northern Mexico. It's a front-fanged venomous snake and its bite can be deadly to humans. Like all rattlesnakes it has a rattle at the end of its tail, which is made up of a series of ring-like scales. The rattle makes a loud buzzing noise to warn off attackers and it can be heard from far away.

Spitting cobras can squirt their venom up to 2.7m

SPITTING IMAGE

Most cobras inject deadly poison into their victim by biting them – but not the Mozambique spitting cobra. This is one of the most dangerous snakes in the world, and when confronted, it rears up and spits jets of venom into its attacker's eyes. The venom is squirted from two small holes near the tip of the teeth. Its effect is immediate and causes smarting, inflammation and worst of all, permanent blindness.

Some snakes push their windpipe out of their mouth to avoid being suffocated when swallowing a large animal

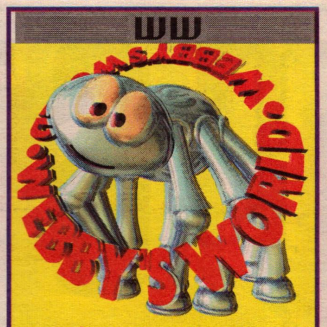
EGG EATER

The African egg-eating snake eats birds' eggs by expanding its mouth three times the size of its head! Once it's got the egg in its gullet, the snake bends its neck so that the eggshell is pierced by its 25-30 internal spines before using its vertebrae to flatten the egg. The snake's throat muscles ensure that none of the egg spills out of its mouth. Once the egg is eaten, the shell is regurgitated.

PICTURES: FRANCOIS GOHIER/JEAN-PAUL FERRERO/THOMAS DRESSLER/KEN LUCAS/KEN FINK/ALAN WEAVING/ARIBA LONDON, DIGITALVISION, REUTERS, AP

BERYL the PERIL

BERYL THE PERIL APPEARS EVERY WEEK IN The DANDY



www.footee.net

By mixing football with learning, footee.net has hit on a winning way to get smart without feeling like you're being bogged down with lessons. Discover how to use angles in a shooting game, meet TV pundits Barry Vinegar and Mark Lansen. Plus, the cleverer you become, the better the fantasy footie team you get. Kickin'!

www.yugiohkingofgames.com

Yu-Gi-Oh is the latest animation causing a commotion in its Japanese homeland. The series – based on giant monsters, powerful magic and Egyptian legends – has just started on Sky One, every Saturday and Sunday, at 9.30am. Hit or miss? Make up your own mind up by checking out the Yu-Gi-Oh website. Beware, there are cards to collect as well!

PICTURE: ©SKY ONE

If you are a webhead and have discovered a great site, or have created one of your own, spin me a mail and tell me all about it on webby@sunday-times.co.uk

FRESH!

HARIBO HORROR MIX ★★★★★

Eye of toad and wing of bat... get into a spooky Hallowe'en mood with these scarily-shaped fruit flavoured gum and foam sweets. You will start by sinking your teeth into just one of these juicy gems, then the whole Horror Mix disappears before your eyes [and into your stomach!]. Deliciously devilish and monstrously moreish, look out for them in supermarkets and newsagents, priced 99p a pack. Plus, Haribo has just conjured up a Harry Potter-inspired Magic Mix as well!

SWEETS

DENKI BLOCKS! ★★★★★

Say farewell to friends and warn your parents that you're disappearing into your room indefinitely as Denki Blocks! could keep you hooked for weeks. It's the most naggingly unputdownable puzzle game for ages, as players race against the clock to manipulate a collection of blocks to try to form shapes. Denki Blocks! is also out for the Game Boy Color and Sky Digital viewers can sample the mayhem for free, using their interactive remote. A Tetris for the 21st century.

GAME BOY ADVANCE

CADBURYLAND MILK CHOCOLATE & RAISIN CRISPY CAKE ★★★★★

Minimum effort for maximum results is the best way to describe the tasty treats you achieve with this "no-bake" do-it-yourself cake mix. All the ingredients are in the pack – including the cake cases. Simply mix together the milk chocolate, puffed rice and juicy raisins for 12 mini chocolate cakes. The results? Chocolicious delights that are ideal for lunch-box snacks and certain to make your classmates jealous with your culinary skills. Chocs away!

CAKE MIX

Poor Beryl can never get it right!

FUNDAY

BUZZ!

Spy Kids on the run: Daryl and Alexa

SUPER SPY GUYS

Buzz! meets Alexa Vega and Daryl Sabara, the young stars of hit movie Spy Kids – out now on video and DVD

Can you describe the characters you play in Spy Kids?

Alexa: Carmen is a very, very spunky girl who's not family-orientated at all. She can't stand her brother, and I can see why! At the beginning, she thinks her parents are not cool at all so she keeps running away and coming back.

Daryl: Juni is very scared at the start but as the movie goes on he becomes braver and braver. He has warts because he worries but by the end he takes his bandages off and there are no warts as he has no fear.

Which of the cool gadgets in Spy Kids would you love to own?

Daryl: I want the watch because it turns into a satellite and all these different things.

Alexa: My favourite would have to be the rocket pack. How cool would it be to fly around?

Do you have any talents that would make you a good spy in real life?

Alexa: I'm really good at keeping secrets. Daryl's not, as he always squeals all my secrets. I guess I'm sneaky as well.

Daryl: I can be sneaky and really quiet. I'm suave and sophisticated as well, a bit like James Bond!

What is your favourite part in the movie?

Alexa: My favourite scene would be the very last one where we learn a really good lesson, that you should always keep with your family, no matter what.

Daryl: Mine would have to be when we are fighting our evil robot clones. A stunt double played the robots and we played the characters and then we swapped.

You play brother and sister in the film, do you think you would make a good brother and sister in real life?

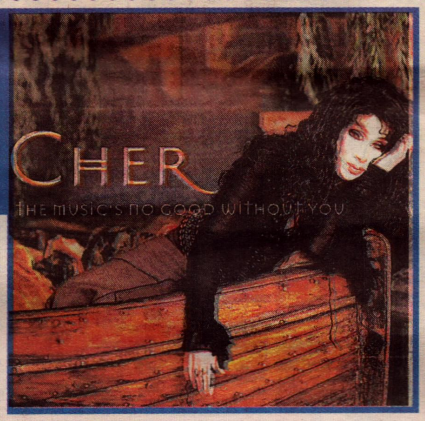
Alexa: No!

Daryl: Yes!

Alexa: I don't want to have a brother. That's what I've learned since doing this movie!

CHER DELIGHT

Pop diva Cher is back! The vintage vamp returns with The Music's No Good Without You [out on November 5]. It sounds pleasant and mellow – but this track deserves a warning sticker because it's a huge grower! Believe it, she's back.



KICK TRACK

Masai's Sharon says that the girls' new single, Kickback, out tomorrow, is the perfect song for our troubled times. "Despite everything that's happened in the world recently, we just have to get back up on our feet and carry on," Sharon says. "That's what Kickback is all about."

Masai: Anna and Sharon

NAT'S BACK

Natalie Imbruglia has certainly taken her time to record her new album. There were even rumours that Nat's record company offered her a bonus to hurry up! New single, That Day, is out tomorrow and it sees the Aussie singer trying to cram the lyrics for three songs on to one record – so it's certainly value for money, if a little exhausting to keep up with!

NO QUITTER

You might recognise Jamie Benson. She was in British girlgroup Hepburn, who had a huge hit with I Quit and who even appeared on Buffy. But no sooner had the girls sang I Quit than they did just that and split up!

Jamie's back in the limelight, though, and determined to make it as a solo singer. "I'm nervous and a bit scared," admits the 24-year-old, from South Wales. "This is it now, this is my big dream – I just hope people like the new music."

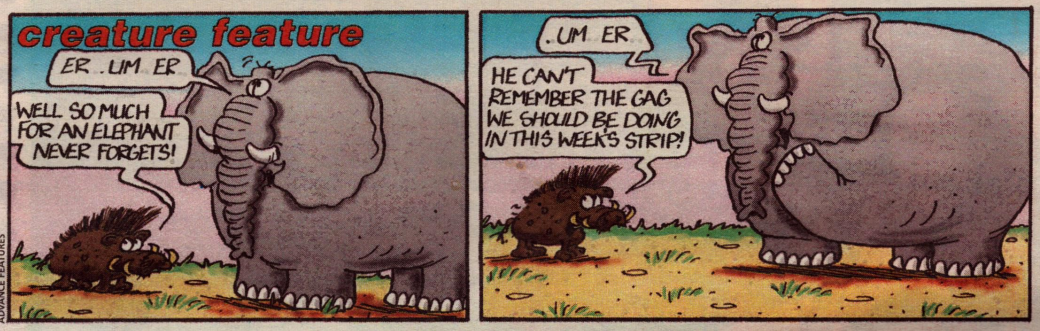
When Jamie first went on stage after Hepburn split, she says it felt a bit weird. "But being a solo singer makes me much happier," she admits. "I'm excited to be doing my own stuff. Hepburn was a great experience and it helped me up the career ladder, but the music I'm making now is more mature."

Jamie's new music is a catchy guitar-pop single called Invincible, followed by an album she's been recording in America. She's even been working with rock musicians such as Lenny Kravitz and Bryan Adams!

Jamie's single Invincible is out tomorrow

PICTURES ©DISNEY, MICHAEL LAVINE

Watch out for a Buzz! special next week



ADVANCE FEATURES

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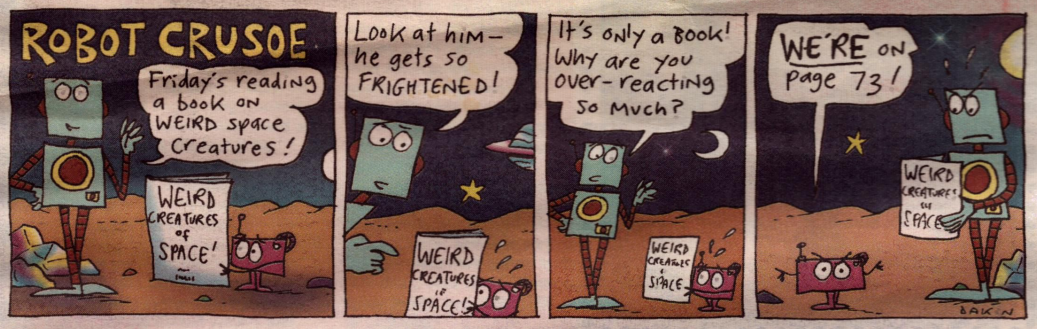


NEXT WEEK

Rayman returns! Funday travels to France to meet the brains behind the cool console character's new madcap game

Buzz! gets a behind-the-stage look at the musical production of Disney's Beauty And The Beast

Read Funday's exclusive interview with the Royal Ballet's top ballerina, Darcey Bussell

f-mail

Send your letters, cartoons, jokes and drawings to: The Funday Times, PO Box 5073, Leighton Buzzard LU7 7GX Send your e-mail to: funday.times@sunday-times.co.uk

TOTALLY TOYS

The interactive toy extravaganza, Totalfun, is taking place at London's Olympia, today, from 10am to 6pm. So if you're about, don't miss out, grab a grown-up and prepare yourself for some fun.

With skateboard and BMX stunts, football, trampolines, fashion shows and more, it really will be total fun. For further info, visit www.totalfun.org

The writer of the star f-mail will receive a goody bag from Totalfun exhibitors, including a Tomy Muy Loco, a Rush Hour brainteaser game, Who Wants To Be A Millionaire? Junior, plus a pogo stick.

The other f-mailers will receive a cool Tomy Muy Loco.

STAR

Dear f-mail,

Here's a spooky Hallowe'en story for you! One evening my mum and I were sitting in the living room watching TV. On a cupboard near the TV is a very heavy pot with a massive plant in it. Suddenly the pot started shaking violently but nothing else in the room moved. Then just as suddenly as it started, it stopped. I ran out of the room and didn't go back in for the next few days. This is a completely true story and it happened to me. I don't think I will ever forget it. Could it be a ghost? My house is now 120 years old, so it is very possible!

Mirella Biagi, 13, Glasgow

Why does the mushroom always get invited to parties?

Because he's a fungi [fun-guy]!

Martyn Booth, Pontypridd

Got a joke? Write to f-mail and share it with us

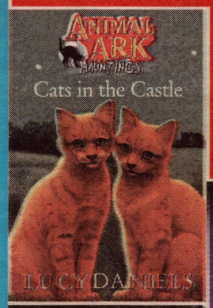
FUNDAY

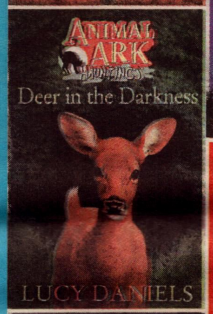
WIN IT!

COMPETITION ADDRESS Send answers to all competitions to us at: The Funday Times, PO Box 5073, Leighton Buzzard LU95 1AY. Competition deadline: November 7

You can e-mail your competition answers to: funday.comps@sunday-times.co.uk
Sorry, but only one e-mail per entrant will be accepted.

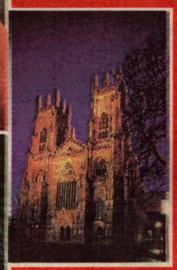
SPOOKY TALES





The best-selling Animal Ark series is releasing three new Hauntings titles: Cats In The Castle, Deer In The Darkness and Foal In The Fog.

Fans of the books will lap up the new stories which feature Mandy and James who will do anything to help an animal in distress, even if they are ghostly animals who come back to haunt their owners ... Perfect for Hallowe'en!



To find out more about the books, go to the official website on www.animalark.co.uk

To promote the new titles, Animal Ark Hauntings are offering one Funday reader and their family [two adults and two children] a trip to the historic city of York.

Also included in the prize is two nights' accommodation in the Queen's Hotel, tickets to the spine-chilling York Dungeon and the Castle Museum, as well as having a spooky tour of the most haunted places in the creepy city.

Plus, the winner and 20 runners-up will each get a set of the books.

To enter, tell us which animal is considered lucky if it crosses your path.

Mark your entry HAUNT ME and send it with your name, age and address, to the competition address above.

the York Dungeon

RETRO ROBOT

IR-V [£49.99] may look like it's from the 1980s – with its matt silver finish and retro design – but this interactive robo-chum is set to be one of the top toys for Christmas 2001.

IR-V's LCD screen looks like an old Casio watch and the basic computer game graphics are just like the early Space Invader table games. But don't be fooled, it has 21st century technology so that it can interact with you and your PC.

The retro robot, whose favourite music is heavy metal, uses wireless technology to communicate with its own website at www.Ir-Vonline.com. It loves showing off and can talk, joke, sing and dance.

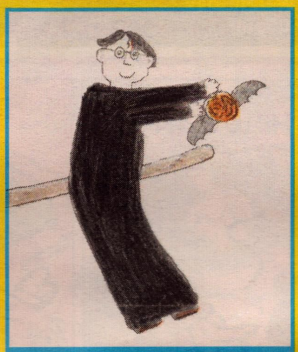
Funday and Halsall have teamed up to offer two lucky readers an IR-V, complete with a Dell Dimension PC.

To enter, tell us the name of the famous two-legged robot in Star Wars.

Mark your entry IR-V and send it, with your name, age and address, to the competition address above.

Normal TNL competition rules apply to all Funday Times competitions

Dear f-mail,
I was so pleased to see your full-page interview with my favourite author, Anthony Horowitz [issue 627]. I thought he wasn't that popular and would never be interviewed by a newspaper, but you proved me wrong! I can prove that I am his number-one fan because I have not many more books to read before I have read all his novels. I've read Granny, The Switch, Groosham Grange, The Devil And His Boy, Stormbreaker, Public Enemy Number Two, The Falcon's Malteser [the last two are my current joint favourites] and I'm in the middle of reading South By South East. Thank you for telling me about his new book – I've been waiting to read another one of his murderous classics!
Alastair Laurenson, 11, Chalfont St Peter



Clare Murphy, 8, Glenageary, Ireland

What's Dracula's favourite pet?
A blood hound!

What do baby witches play with?
Dead-dy bears!

What's a ghost's favourite TV programme?
Horror-nation Street!

Krystina Smith, Bishops Stortford

Dear f-mail,
Here is a picture of the Mona Pizza! I think it's really funny, do you? There is also a rhyme about it!

Dressed in brown and black,
A rather unhealthy snack.
Long brown hair,
Stretchy cheese,
I'll order a Mona Pizza, please!

Ruby Radcliffe, 12, Newark

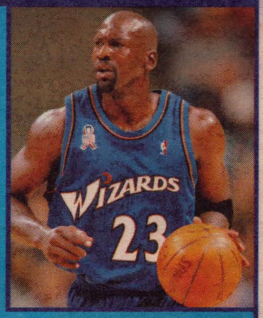
f-mail will be going Harry Potter crazy soon!

FUNDAY

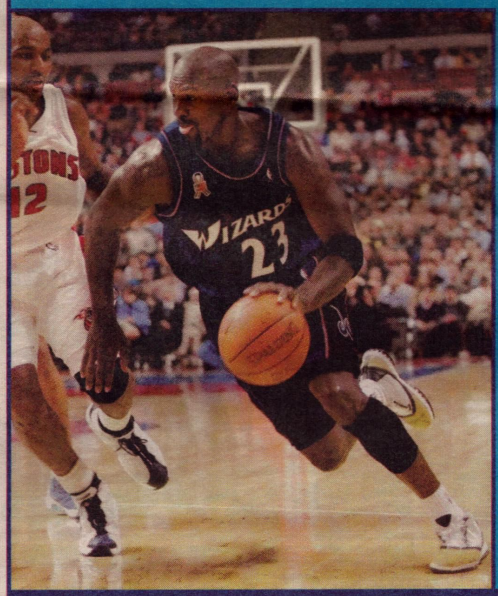
SPORT

MICHAEL JORDAN

The start of the new NBA season on Tuesday also sees the welcome return to the basketball court of the greatest player in the sport's history – Michael Jordan. "MJ" came out of retirement in September and the slam dunkin' star will don his famous No 23 jersey for the Washington Wizards – who begin their season against the New York Knicks, at Madison Square Garden



- This is the second time MJ has come out of retirement. The 38-year-old first left basketball unexpectedly in October 1993 to play baseball for the Birmingham Barons, in a failed attempt to make it into major league baseball. Michael then returned to the NBA in March 1995, playing for the Chicago Bulls until January 1999.
- Michael's success in the sport is legendary – winning the NBA Championship with the Chicago Bulls six times between 1991 and 1998 and collecting the league's MVP award [most valuable player] five times. He was also part of the US "dream team" that won gold in the 1992 Olympics.



- During his 13 seasons in the NBA, MJ led the league in scoring a record 10 times and he's also the fourth all-time top scorer with 29,277 points. Perhaps the real testament to Michael's talent is his ability to perform better in the pressure of the play-offs. He has averaged a league-record 31.5 points per regular season game throughout his career and 33.4 in the play-offs!
- After deciding on a comeback, Michael had to give up his position as president of basketball operations at the Washington Wizards. The basketball star now has a two-year contract playing for the club, but will donate his first year's salary to the victims of the September 11 terrorist attacks in America.
- Michael has already been in action scoring 41 points in a recent pre-season game against the New Jersey Nets. "It took a lot of work to get back to this point. I had to shed about 11kg. It's like a verification of the hard work that I've done. I don't think that I'm there yet, but I'm on the right road," said Michael after the game.

BBC1 is showing Michael's comeback game live on Wednesday. Set your video though – coverage starts at 11.05pm!

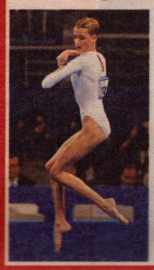
SPORT NEWS

Funday picks out the best of this week's sporting action

Thursday Uefa Cup, Chelsea v Hapoel Tel Aviv

Chelsea have a tough task to overturn a 2-0 first-leg deficit in this Uefa Cup tie. Six Blues players decided not to travel to Israel for the defeat due to the tensions in the Middle East. Absentees Graeme Le Saux, Emmanuel Petit and Eidur Gudjohnsen should return, but will it be enough? Live coverage on Sky Sports Extra from 7.30pm.

Saturday World Gymnastics Championships, Ghent



The world's best gymnasts head to Ghent, Belgium, for the first big competition since the Sydney Olympics. In the women's competition, expect Romania's Andreea Raducan and Russia's Svetlana Khorkina to be the main contenders for the all-round titles. Watch the action on BBC1's Grandstand from noon.

IT'S TRICKY

Get ready for the new all-action extreme sports spectacular Rocket Power: Team Rocket Rescue [£19.99, from THQ].

This new PSOne game features all the Rocket Rescue favourites, including Otto, Reggis, Twister and Sam, taking part in extreme sports competitions and shows. Are you up to their radical moves, jumps and spectacular tricks?

To celebrate the release of the new game, THQ is offering three winners a PSOne console and a copy of the game.

Plus, five runners-up will win a copy of the game.

To enter, name the sport in which a competitor would do an "ollie".

Mark your entry ROCKET and send it, with your name, age and address, to the competition address on page 11.

PICTURES: REUTERS/ANDREW WALLACE, EPA/AFP, EPA

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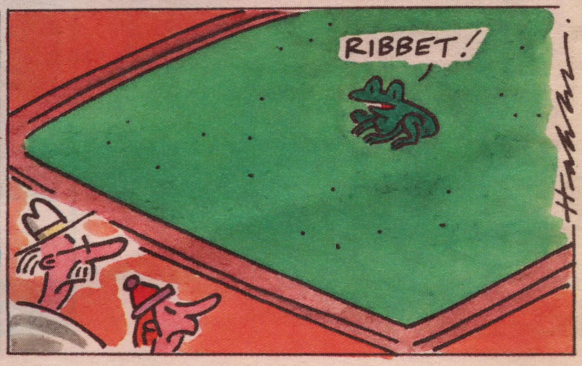

Who's your favourite sport star? E-mail today and let us know